

MINUTES
LOWER REPUBLICAN NATURAL RESOURCES DISTRICT
Lower Republican NRD Meeting Room, 30 North John Street, Alma, NE
March 11, 2021 at 2:00 pm

Board of Directors Meeting

Chairperson Marlin Murdoch called the meeting of the Lower Republican NRD Board of Directors to order with an invitation to prayer at 2:08pm immediately following the Variance Request hearings. The chairperson provided notice that the location of the current copy of the statutes dealing with public meetings laws is located on the south wall. Guests were asked to sign the attendance roster.

MATERIAL E-MAILED OUT PRIOR TO THE MEETING & AVAILABLE AT THE MEETING

Agenda

LRNRD Board Meeting Minutes, Index of Decisions, 2/21

LRNRD/RWP Treasurer's Report, 2/21

Staff Report

Variance Request #297 Randall Burton

Variance Request #298 Brent Ballou

Excused Absences: Terry Hoit

Directors present at NRD Office: Clark Andrews, David Bartels, Bill Bose, Matt Harrison, Tim Kahrs, Marlin Murdoch, Roger Nelson, Toby tenBensel, Nelson Trambly, Brad Wulf.

Others present at the LRNRD office: Nick Simonson, NRCS, Randall Burton, Holbrook, Brent and Brian Ballou, Wilsonville, Dave Domina, Omaha, Roger Benjamin, Oxford, Steve Seeman, Oxford.

Via Zoom: Katie Spohn, Paul Lembrick, Lori Potter, Mike Placke.

Staff present at LRNRD office: Todd Siel, Shirlee Poyser, Kristen Heft.

Attorney Dave Domina, representing A) SBS Farms, Inc., B) Tamara Bishop & Julie Smith, and C) Steven Seeman, addressed the board. Mr. Domina stated that each of these three clients has a separate concern they wished to present from proceedings in the LRNRD Case No. CAD #2016-03, In the Matter of the Estate of Gerald Schluntz, Tamara Bishop, and Julie Smith. Mr. Domina briefly explained the separate positions for each of his clients and also handed out a six-page document detailing their positions (which is recorded in the minute book). General Manager Todd Siel stated that the LRNRD will take his presentation under advisement and let him know if the board chooses to take any further action.

Motion #1 by Bill Bose seconded by Roger Nelson to approve the February Minutes and Variance Request minutes as presented. Motion carried. Ayes 10, Nays 0, Absent 1 – Terry Hoit.

Motion #2 by Tim Kahrs seconded by Matt Harrison to approve the LRNRD and Rural Water Treasurer's report. Motion carried. Ayes 10, Nays 0, Absent 1 – Terry Hoit.

NRCS Staff Report: Nick Simonson, gave the NRCS report. The new White House administration has rescinded previous COVID directives causing major changes to the office staffing. No more than 25 percent of the normal staffing capacity can be in the office at the same time, for the time being. 75% of the staff telework.

EQIP - \$460,125.00 has been allocated for EQIP which will be split into four funding pools. 65% will go to cropland and 35% to rangeland. There will soon be a special sign-up for a new program called EQIP-CIC.

CSP - \$574,000.00 was obligated for the LRNRD, but do not expect any more renewal funding. As with EQIP, the ranking and obligation period has been pushed back due to software issues. There are also some changes to the Classic contracting going forward that were recently released by NHQ and the details of those changes are being configured to align with these requirements. The March 12 deadline has been delayed and the new deadline has not been set at the time of this report.

LRNRD Staff Report: Manager Todd Siel, discussed that the Integrated Management Plan (IMP) was previously updated in 2016. Jesse Bradley will be at the next board meeting presenting the draft changes to the updated IMP. On March 25th, there will be a Stakeholders meeting to review the changes. Modifications are minimal language changes, but the major change that should be incorporated into this IMP will be getting credit for actions taken within each NRD. The main reason for the IMP update is due to changes needed as a result of adopting the Republican River Basin-wide Plan.

Tom Riley spoke at the NRD Managers meeting held in Lincoln on March 3rd. Senator Groene's bills dealing with augmentation projects, LB 589 and LB591, are still in committee. LB 26 provides a sales tax exemption for residential water service. This could possibly affect the LRNRD Rural Water system.

The 2020 census results will come out later this year. If the census population drastically changes in our district, then statute requires us to redistrict. The last change to our geographic sub-districts was in 2011.

The NARD will be celebrating the 50th anniversary of the NRD system in 2022.

Tree order deadline is Friday, March 12. Tree count is up to approximately 11,000 trees.

2020 district-wide water usage: LRNRD 8.15", MRNRD 11.5", URNRD 14.4".

Variance requests were presented.

Motion #3 by Clark Andrews seconded by Bill Bose to approve variance request #297 for Randall Burton and variance request #298 for Brent Ballou. Motion carried. Ayes 10, Nays 0, Absent 1 – Terry Hoit.

Platte Republican High Flow Diversion Project (PRD): PRD has until March 21st to file any motions with the Nebraska Department of Natural Resources (NeDNR) regarding objections to our application.

NCORPE: The next scheduled board meeting is in April.

NARD: Roger Nelson is on the NARD I&E Committee. The 2020 Nebraska State Envirothon will be held at Lake Wanahoo in April. The International Envirothon will be held as a virtual competition in Lincoln this summer. There will be discussion on how a portion of the donated money will be redistributed back to each NRD. The NARD Staff moved into its new office building earlier this year.

WFPO – RFP: Todd Siel presented the draft WFPO Request for Proposal (RFP) to Allen Gehring, NRCS for review. The RFP's will be submitted to five consultants for consideration.

Motion #4 by Clark Andrews seconded by Roger Nelson to move that the Board go into Closed Session at 3:07pm to discuss Contractual Negotiation, Imminent Litigation, and personnel. Motion carried. Ayes 10, Nays 0, Absent 1 – Terry Hoit.

Motion #11 by Clark Andrews seconded by David Bartels to move that the Board come out of Closed Session at 4:35pm and declare that no actions of the board, official or unofficial, were taken during said Closed Session. Motion carried. Ayes 10, Nays 0, Absent 1 – Terry Hoit.

Other Business: None.

The next regularly scheduled board meeting will be April 8th, 2021 at 7:00 pm. The meeting was adjourned at 4:35pm.

Secretary

Date